

Altar

by RinsDarkMagician

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Summary: On a night where Heisuke isn't feeling well Shinpachi comes to realize how much he really cares about his young friend.

YAOI

1. Spiral Corridor

So I was...not a good place when I wrote this. I certainly wasn't myself and I needed to let off some steam. This is a very dark chapter and the intent of what was meant to occur should be obvious. However, I waited a long time before writing the next chapter to this so it changed from what it originally was supposed to be. Now it's...A LOVE STORY! ^^ So though this chapter is dark, please keep going to the next chapter! It's a lot cuter than this one..._

The weather outside was dark and cloudy. Anyone with eyes could tell rain would be coming, though it didn't matter to the Shinsengumi. They would train regardless of what the weather was like. It was their job, their duty, to keep up their skills and perform their job with as little mistakes as possible. One never stops learning and the day a person says they've stopped learning is the day they die. The same goes for the warriors. The day they claim they are perfect and stop training is the day they die and most likely not in a pleasant way.

So when one of them missed the training it was not taken lightly. Toshi didn't bother asking anyone where Heisuke was. He simply went straight to his room and knocked on the door before opening it slightly.

"Why are you still in bed, Heisuke?"

Heisuke hoped his harsh coughing would be a good enough answer. He didn't bother saying anything as he threw the covers from his body because he was just too hot. His hair was down and strewn about on his pillow. As he coughed again he turned to his side and buried his

face in the pillow. He was a bit ashamed to see Toshi. They both knew that being sick was no excuse to fall behind, but Heisuke couldn't even get up the strength to walk.

"I'll leave you." Toshi said. "I'll be back to check on you when we start dinner."

He left closing the door behind him only to see Sano and Shinpachi standing on either of side him.

"What's wrong with Heisuke?" Shinpachi asked.

"Is he okay?" Sano asked, following Toshi as he began walking.

"I'm not sure. Has he said anything to you two about feeling ill?" Toshi answered.

The two other men looked at each other, trying to remember if Heisuke had given any indication at all that he was unwell. They thought back on the past couple of days and a few things started to come to memory.

"I did notice he was eating less!" Shinpachi said. "I stole practically his whole plate yesterday."

"I also noticed he was running out of breath quickly these past few days. During training he would get exhausted so quickly. I asked if he was all right and he said his chest felt a little tight. He told me not to worry about it though. If I had known it would have gotten this badâ€¦."

"It's not your fault, Harada. Don't worry. We'll take care of him," Toshi said. He kept walked, leaving the other two standing and staring after him. They both had the same idea. They turned back around and went straight for Heisuke's room. They didn't bother knocking though they did slowly and quietly open the door and silently walk inside.

"How are you feeling?" Shinpachi asked as they made their way over to him.

Heisuke just shook his head, putting his arm over his eyes. "I feel soâ€¦" He drifted off as he felt another cough come up.

Sano stood over him while Shinpachi bent down on one knee to get a closer look at him.

"He's so pale," Shinpachi said to Sano.

"He looks sweaty too. It's not too hot so it must just be him," Sano said.

Shinpachi put a hand to Heisuke's cheek though it didn't take long for him to remove it and wipe it on Heisuke's robe. "He is sweaty. Gross."

Heisuke actually cracked a smile as he removed his arm from his eyes. Shinpachi could only stare at how blood shot they were. Looking down at him he realized that his friend was seriously ill. There was something really wrong with him and there was nothing they could do

for him except try to keep him happy and comfortable.

"You guys should go," Heisuke said with difficulty. He kept himself from trying to cough and swallowed several times before continuing. "I don't want you to catchâ€¦."

He hid his face in pillow again as harsh and raspy coughs came out of him. Sano and Shinpachi gave each other concerned looks. Neither was sure of what to do. They just stayed silent and waited for Heisuke to calm down. When he did he didn't move his face from the pillow. He stayed there gasping and trying his best to keep down whatever it was that was trying to make it's way up his throat.

"We'll leave you for now. Toshi said he'll back to check on you at dinner. We'll come too," Sano told him.

Shinpachi stood and followed Sano to the door. "Yeah, I'll take care of your dinner for you. Don't you worry about that."

He laughed as he heard Heisuke tell him "Stay away from my food." They said their byes and left, walking slowly down the hallway. The air between them was heavy and the only thing on their minds was Heisuke.

"He really was pale," Shinpachi said in a low voice.

"Yeah. And when he talkedâ€¦it looked like it hurt," Sano said.

"Those coughs sounded horrible. I thought his lungs were going to fly out of his mouth with how hard he was coughing!"

"Something's terribly wrong. I have a bad feeling."

The two stopped walking and looked at each other, fear evident in their eyes. The same worst-case scenario was playing out in their heads and they could see it written all over each other's faces. Shinpachi's upper lip began to quiver and he quickly looked away from Sano.

"He'll be fine!" Shinpachi shouted. He laughed, an obvious forced laugh, and lightly hit Sano on his back. "Toshi's probably already told one of the doctor's and he'll be there shortly with some medicine for Heisuke! He'll be fine a few days! Hell, maybe even a few hours!"

Sano nodded quickly and closed his eyes. "You're right. He'll be fine! He's too young to be sick like that. He's got a nice, young, healthy immune system andâ€¦he'll be fine." Sano wasn't sure who he was trying to convince. He shook his head once more and tried to believe what he was saying. "He'll be just fineâ€¦."

Just as he said a strong clap of thunder resounded through the skies, making the two men jump. There was a downpour of rain and the two once again looked at each other. The same thought kept running through their heads no matter how hard they tried to push it out.

"He'll make it, Shinpachi. He has to."

All Shinpachi could do was nod as he turned away from Sano again to look at the heavy rain. "He has toâ€¦".

* * *

><p>No! Heisuke doesn't sound like Okita at all!
Psssh...what are you talking about...**

**_Keep going! Next chapter! Move it along, people! I promise it's a lot more light hearted than this chapter is...The next one has lots of fluffy yaoiness.
>**

2. Miracle

Sano and Shinpachi were working hard to finish their dinners quickly so they could go check on Heisuke. Toshi had already gone to give him his dinner and had told the two of them to stay put. He didn't want them to bother him when he was so sick. Of course, he already knew they would just visit him after their meals, but at least he was able to put it off for a little bit to give Heisuke some peace and quiet. Though, perhaps after eating something he would be more inclined to have guests.

"Did the doctor say anything about him?" Sano asked Toshi as he worked on emptying a bowl of rice.

"He'll be fine a few days. With some rest he'll be back on his feet in no time."

"That's great!" Shinpachi said with a mouth full of fish. "We were just planning on seeing him after dinner!"

"I'm already done!" Sano declared. He stood up and headed for the door. "Hurry up!"

It didn't take but a moment for Shinpachi to down the rest of his meal and stand to follow Sano. Outside the rain had stopped falling and in its place was a cool breeze. The two men didn't want to seem too desperate so they walked the hallways to Heisuke's room as calmly as they could.

"Soâ€¦about Heisukeâ€¦". Sano started.

"Hmm? What about him?"

"He's cute."

Shinpachi tripped over nothing nearly falling down, but he recovered and gained his composure. Sano's statement had shocked him to say the least. That was the last thing he was expecting to hear.

"If you think soâ€¦. I know you like to flirt, but I never once thought you would go after Heisuke."

Sano just shook his head and chuckled. "I'm saying what you're thinking, not what I'm thinking."

Shinpachi elbowed his friend. "I'm not thinking that at all."

"Oh, so you don't think he's cute?"

"I didn't say that either!"

"So you do think he's cute?"

"No!"

"Well which is it?" Sano said, pretending to sound annoyed. "Either you think he's cute or you don't think he's cute! Do you think he's ugly?"

"Of course he's not ugly."

"Soâ€|."

Shinpachi was tired of Sano's teasing. This wasn't his normal way of making fun of him. This time he was digging around, trying to pry something out of him. What was Sano up to?

"Fine, he's cute! Jeez, what's this about?"

Sano's face held a look of triumph as he wrapped his arm around Shinpachi's shoulder. He laughed a few times as he used his hand to turn Shinpachi's face towards his.

"So you do have a crush on the kid, don't you?"

Shinpachi stared at the other man. The silence was so thick it could have been cut with a knife. Sano's grin only got wider and wider as more time passed with neither of them saying anything. And then finallyâ€|.

"Are you insane?" Shinpachi yelled, throwing Sano's arm off of him. "What are you talking about?"

"Just calm down!" Sano yelled with a laugh, running a few paces ahead of him. "There's nothing to get upset about. I'm just stating a fact is allâ€|."

Shinpachi lunged at him, but Sano easily dodged and pushed him. He grabbed his arm and twisted it behind him, though he kept the pain to a minimum.

"Come on and admit it, Shinpachi. You can trust me! I won't tell a soul! Promise!"

Shinpachi stepped hard on Sano's foot and managed to free himself. He quickly grasped Sano's head into a headlock. He didn't try as hard as Sano did to keep the pain he felt as little as possible.

"Where did you get such a crazy idea?"

"It's not a crazy idea! You make it so obvious!" Sano failed to keep himself from laughing. His chest hurt from the combination of trying not to begin laughing hysterically and from being suffocated. This conversation was far more amusing than he had anticipated. "I'm pretty sure everyone else already knows! Ask them!"

Shinpachi tightened his grip around Sano's neck to try and stop those annoying laughs coming from him. Sano wasn't letting up anymore than Shinpachi was though. He was determined to hold out for as long as he needed in order to get a confession from Shinpachi.

"Ask Saito! I swear he knows! Sannan will give you a straight answer too! I really do think everyone except oblivious Heisuke knows! Even Chizuru probably knows!"

The two of them stopped arguing as they heard a door roughly slid open behind them. They both turned their heads (Sano did to the best of his ability) to see a rather aggravated but much improved looking Heisuke staring at them. His hair was back up in it's proper ponytail and the color had returned to his face, though it did appear to be turning a bit red out of anger.

"You two are loud," he said, his voice still slightly raspy.

"Sorry, Heisuke," the two men said in unison. Sano quickly got out of Shinpachi's headlock and smiled happily at Heisuke.

"You look loads better! What kind of medicine did the doctor give you?"

Heisuke stared at Sano for a moment longer before responding. "What am I so oblivious to, Sano?" he asked with a hint of venom.

Sano was taken aback for a moment, but laughed it off and slapped Shinpachi on the back. "Oh, nothing. We were just discussing how Shinpachi here thinks you're-" He was cut off instantly by a blow to the middle of his stomach. He bent over, the air completely knocked out of him. Shinpachi just stood there with an innocent look on his face, as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred.

"Your condition looks much better, Heisuke! Are you feeling as well as you're looking?"

Heisuke just rolled his eyes and turned back into his room, leaving the door open as an invitation for them to come inside. Shinpachi began to walk in, but Sano stopped him by putting his arm around his shoulder again and whispering to him, still holding his stomach with his other hand.

"You two never get any alone time! Now's your chance! Don't screw this up!" Sano pushed Shinpachi into the room and closed the door, leaving the two of them on their own. Heisuke had already curled under his sheets and had only looked up when he heard the door slam shut.

"Sano didn't come in?" he said with a few light coughs following.

Shinpachi just scratched the back of his head and shrugged his shoulders. "He said he had something to do."

Heisuke seemed to accept that answer as he closed his eyes and buried his face back in his pillow. Shinpachi sat next to him and the two of them sat in a rather comfortable silence, the only sound breaking it being the occasional cough from Heisuke. Shinpachi was just so relieved to know that Heisuke was all right now. He had been so

scared when he and Sano visited him earlier that day. It was odd to think that between only a few hours Heisuke went from sounding like death to looking like he wasn't even sick at all. It was a miracle.

"Areâ€|are you sure you're okay now?" Shinpachi asked, just for confirmation.

Heisuke smiled slightly and nodded. "I'll be fine. My throat is a little sore, but the doctor said it'll pass soon."

Shinpachi just grunted his understanding. He thought Heisuke was going to go back to resting, but it seemed he had other things he wanted to discuss with the older man.

"Soâ€|you think I'm cute?"

Shinpachi couldn't stop his face from instantly turning red. Seriously? Had Heisuke heard him and Sano arguing all the way down the hall?

"You and Sano are very loud," Heisuke said as if he read his mind.

Shinpachi turned away from Heisuke so he wouldn't see how red his face was turning. "I guess you are."

"I am cute! Do you want to touch me then? Since I'm so cute?"

"Quit getting crazy ideas!" Shinpachi yelled, facing back to Heisuke. "I just said you look good! Nothing more!"

"I think you're cute too, Shinpat-san!"

Shinpachi stopped short. He didn't know exactly what to say to that. Was Heisuke just making fun of him or was he serious? And why did it even bother him? What did he care what Heisuke thought he looked like? He pushed down the thought that he did actually care what he thought of him. And as much as he tried to push away the feelings that were rising within him, he couldn't. As unfamiliar as they were it seemed they were here to stay, but he didn't mind entirely. He felt happy. Happy that Heisuke called him cute? Or perhaps happy that he was simply with Heisuke at all? So how come when he looked at him he was happy butâ€|also filled a sense of longing?

Out of nowhere Heisuke stretched out his hand in Shinpachi's direction. Confused, Shinpachi took it and held it in his own, watching as Heisuke just closed his eyes and smiled.

"Since I know you want to touch me."

Shinpachi didn't say anything as he kept holding Heisuke's hand. He turned it over and started to draw lines along the palm with his finger. Heisuke's hand was so small and fragile compared to his. He slid his finger up to the wrist and then finally the arm. He could feel muscle under the skin, the proof of Heisuke's strength.

He was so small and yet so much strength and energy poured out of him. He deserved the admiration of his peers and regardless if he knew it or not he had earned it.

He had also earned much more from Shinpachi.

Shinpachi was shaken out of his thoughts as he felt a shudder beneath his hand. He had hit a sensitive spot on Heisuke's arm, causing him tremble.

"Sorry..." Shinpachi said.

"It's okay. You didn't do anything."

"Your hand is freezing, Heisuke."

Heisuke just chuckled and took his hand back, placing it under his blanket. "I'm pretty cold."

Shinpachi wasn't sure if it was okay for him to be warmed back up if he was already cold. Wouldn't the temperature change cause him to possibly get sick again? That was the last thing he wanted, but he didn't want Heisuke to be uncomfortable while he was recovering either.

Taking a dare, Shinpachi lifted the blanket and crawled underneath it with Heisuke. Before the other could even question what was going on Shinpachi grabbed him into an embrace and held his head to his chest. He used his reasoning that he just didn't want Heisuke to be cold to explain what he was doing. However, Heisuke never even asked. Instead he felt the boy bring his arms to his chest and keep them there and he felt one of his legs squeeze it's way in between his two.

"You're really warm. Ah, I wish I wasn't sick."

Shinpachi didn't say anything as he inhaled Heisuke's scent. Perhaps Sano was right. He had feelings for this kid and every one noticed except oblivious Heisuke...and oblivious Shinpachi.

Shinpachi lifted Heisuke's face to his and planted a small kiss on his lips. The two stared at each other before Shinpachi finally thought of something to say.

"You're really cute."

Heisuke just stared at him with what looked like shock and even fear. Shinpachi suddenly regretted getting under the covers with him, let alone actually kissing him. When Heisuke lowered his head completely to avoid his gaze he knew right then and there he had made a mistake. Heisuke was his best friend! Best friends don't do things like this! He could see all of the trust Heisuke had in him shatter. All of it just went down in flames right before his eyes and it was entirely his fault.

"I'm sorry." He quickly mumbled as he got up from under the covers and made his way to the door. His heart fell as Heisuke didn't stop him. A part of him had hoped Heisuke would call his name and tell him it was all right and that he had done nothing wrong; however he was wishing for too much.

"Wait!"

Or perhaps his wish would come true. Just as he opened the door

Heisuke had called to him. Shinpachi slowly turned around and looked at Heisuke who had already wrapped the covers around himself again. His bright green eyes avoided Shinpachi's as he seemed to slowly sink more into the covers.

"It's really cold," he said in a small voice with a cough interrupting him. "Pleaseâ€|you're really warm."

That was all it took for Shinpachi to shut the door and dive back under the covers with Heisuke again. They went back to the position they were in before, though this time Heisuke raised one of his hands to drag his fingers along Shinpachi's cheek.

"You're okay with me feeling this way?" Shinpachi asked in a shaky voice.

"Areâ€|are you in love with me?"

That was a difficult question to answer. If it hadn't been for Sano, Shinpachi wouldn't be here in the first place. He also wouldn't have realized that he did indeed feel something special for Heisuke. Was this feeling love? This happiness, this joy, this light hearted feeling within him and nervousness that accompanied it?

"I don't know." He answered honestly.

Heisuke just smiled. "I don't know what I'm feeling either. It's nice though!" he said with a laugh.

"It is nice," Shinpachi agreed.

Heisuke then brought his lips on top Shinpachi's and placed a kiss there, much like the one he had received earlier. "That's nice too."

Shinpachi quickly nodded his head. "It is. It's really-" he cut himself off as he pressed his lips onto Heisuke's. He didn't want to let go this time so he dragged his tongue along Heisuke's lips, willing him to open them. He did and they relished in each other's taste. Shinpachi held Heisuke even tighter, wrapping his larger arms around the other's skinny waist. Their legs were already hooked together so Shinpachi easily flipped himself on top of Heisuke, though the quickness of it caused him to break the kiss due to coughing.

"I'm sorry." Shinpachi said, resting his head on Heisuke's shoulder. "I forgot you were sick."

Heisuke just shook his head and coughed a few more times before finally leaning his head back on the pillow. "It's fine. You shouldn't be kissing me anyway. You should wait until I'm better."

Shinpachi rolled off of Heisuke and they went right back to what was their new favorite position. "So there will be a next time then?"

Heisuke nodded his head before hiding his face in Shinpachi's neck and giving him a quick kiss there. These unfamiliar feelings weren't so bad. In fact, the two of them welcomed those feelings, especially

now that they knew how wonderful they felt. They both secretly hoped they would be able to go far with their new foundâ€|emotion.

Yet, the night and it's excitement had taken it's toll on Heisuke. He closed his eyes, willing sleep to take him over. As much as he wanted to stay up he needed to rest if he was going to start feeling better, though he wasn't going to leave Shinpachi without an answer.

"Definitely."

A next time would be inevitable.

* * *

><p>Oh yes...there's a chapter three ^_^
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**Sano: By tomorrow morning Heisuke and Shinpachi are going to be an item and it's all thanks to me!**

**Saito: Did you force them?**

**Sano: What? No I didn't force them! They just needed a little push!**

**Okita: So you forced them...!**

_**Sano: ...NO!

>_

3. Love Love Loveless

**Just putting it out there that I couldn't remember what everyone called one another...so it may be a little incorrect! Other than that I hope you enjoy! **

The party had completed hours ago. It wasn't so much of a celebration as just an excuse to have some fun. Surprisingly enough everybody joined the three men who started it. They thought they were going to be on their own but Okita decided to drink along with them, followed by Saito, Toshi, Kondo, even Sannan and Yamazaki took a break to have fun with them. And of course Chizuru was there having fun and doing her best to clean up after everyone.

Yet the three who started the party were the last three to leave. They lazily sat around, finishing off the few remaining drinks and talking about absolutely nothing. Finally Heisuke had been the first one to retreat to slumber, though he didn't make it out of the room. Shinpachi felt the weight of the other man fall against him and he knew he had fallen asleep. He chuckled as he gently moved Heisuke so his head would be resting in his lap.

Sano watched as Shinpachi toyed around with Heisuke's ponytail before deciding to turn the conversation around.

"So, how are things between you two?"

Shinpachi smiled slightly. "How do we appear from the outside looking

in?"

"You appearâ€|" Sano chose his words carefully. "â€|stable. Secure. Happy. To be honest it looks like not much has changed between you two."

Shinpachi just nodded as he continued to tug on Heisuke's hair. Sano didn't want to seem like he was being invasive, but he could tell something was on Shinpachi's mind. It made him wonder if things weren't as perfect as they appeared.

"How are things from the inside looking out?"

A heavy sigh escaped Shinpachi. "Fine."

"Only fine?"

"Only fine."

"Thatâ€|wasn't what I was hoping to hear."

Sano stared at Shinpachi and noticed he suddenly looked more tired than he had only a few moments before. That was all wrong. He should have been glowing. Sano had conversations with Shinpachi about his relationship before and he always acted excited, happy, and full of life. He acted like a newly wed, but now Shinpachi seemedâ€|sad. For some reason Sano felt that if Shinpachi and Heisuke were having problems then it would be up to him to help them fix it.

"What's going on with you two? Come on, talk to me," Sano said.

Shinpachi finally let Heisuke's long ponytail fall from his hand as he leaned his head against the wall, not looking at Sano.

"Iâ€|I really love him, Sano. I love him so much."

Sano waited for him to continue and gave him a confused look when he didn't. "That'sâ€|a good thing, right?"

"Not if he doesn't love me back."

Sano looked from Shinpachi to the sleeping Heisuke and back to Shinpachi again. Did Heisuke do something? Heisuke could do stupid things sometimes, but Sano wanted to believe he was smart enough to not do anything that could lose Shinpachi's trust.

"Did Heisuke say something to you, Shinpachi? Did he say something to hurt you?"

Shinpachi just shook his head. "It's what he doesn't say that hurts me. Every day I tell him how much I love him and he never says it back. He's never once told me he loves me."

Sano took a deep breath. "That's why you sound so miserableâ€|."

Sometimes Heisuke spoke too much, but in this case he didn't speak enough. Sano wished he knew what was going on in the young man's head so he could reassure Shinpachi that it was nothing major. It wasn't

so simple. Loving a person was never simple and right now Heisuke had just made things a lot more difficult than they needed to be.

"It's hard saying it and never hearing it back," Shinpachi said.

"Heisuke is young," Sano said with a smile. "He's still trying to find himself in this world. Love is too big for him to comprehend. You're older and wiser and know exactly what you want in life. Heisuke doesn't."

"If Heisuke was unsure about our relationship then he shouldn't have kept it going for this long."

"I'm not saying he's unsure about you!" Sano instantly wished he could take back what he said. He needed to be smarter with his words, though he was pretty sure he just created an even bigger mess. "I'm saying he's unsure about love! He knows he wants to be with you and he knows he cares deeply about you, but he just can't understand that that feeling is love!"

Shinpachi just shook his head. "It still hurts." He carefully gathered Heisuke in his arms and stood, indicating he was done with this little party. Sano graciously opened the door for him and walked with him to Heisuke's room so he could get the door for him there too. He watched as Shinpachi gently laid the smaller boy on his futon and planted a kiss on his forehead before swiftly turning around and leaving.

"Things will change," Sano said, giving Shinpachi a pat on his back. "Just give him some time."

"Thanks," Shinpachi said quietly, then retired to his room for the night.

* * *

><p>Everything was calm the following day. Some of the men were working on recovering from hangovers, others were training, and some were just relaxing in the sunlight. However, Heisuke was no where to be found. Sano and Shinpachi assumed he was sleeping late due to drinking so much, but when the morning became afternoon, and the afternoon became evening they knew it couldn't have been that.<p>

"Do you think he's sick again?" Shinpachi asked in a low voice.

Sano just shrugged as he focused on putting the final touches on the meal for the day. Souji was helping him out to the best of his ability and Chizuru was there too. Having finished her chores she stayed in the kitchen to see if she could be of any help.

"Why don't you go check on him if you're so worried about him?" Souji asked.

"Oh...umm...there's no need for that! I already checked on him. He's fine. I gave him his breakfast and I'll bring him his meal too." Chizuru said quickly. The way she spoke earned her a suspicious glance from Shinpachi. She noticed it and avoided his gaze, though she knew she couldn't dodge his next questions.

"Why did he spend the whole day in his room? Are you sure he's not sick?"

Chizuru just nodded. "He's perfectly fine! Really, he's okay so you don't have to go check on him!" She said quickly.

The room was silent and the air suddenly felt so tense. Chizuru tried to think of something to break the silence, but she eventually thought it better that she stay silent. She almost wished she hadn't come to the kitchen in the first place. The last thing she wanted to do was talk about Heisuke, especially to Shinpachi, so even she didn't understand why she decided to hang out with him. It would be inevitable that he would ask about Heisuke.

"So what are you hiding, Chizuru-chan?"

Chizuru broke out of her thoughts and stared into Souji's smirking face. He had asked the question that had been on everyone's mind and in doing so had put Chizuru on the spot. She turned away from Souji's teasing smile only to stare right into Shinpachi's concerned, yet almost accusing eyes. She then turned away from him to see Sano looking at her with curiosity. There was no where to run...

"I'm not hiding anything! I'm not!"

"Oh, you're a terrible liar!" Souji said with a laugh.

"I'm serious! I-"

She was cut off as Shinpachi grabbed her arm, not enough to hurt her, just enough to let her know how serious he was being. She turned her face away from him, but she didn't need to look at him to know that he wasn't going to let her get away without giving them an answer first.

"He really is fine. He's not sick, but..."

"But?" Shinpachi said.

"Heisuke-kun said...he said...he said he didn't want to see you, Shinpachi-san!"

Everyone was quiet again as she said that. Sano almost wanted to scream at her for saying such a horrible thing, but he knew she wasn't lying. He could tell by the look on her face that it pained her to say it as much as it hurt Shinpachi to hear it.

"Now, that's a shame," Souji said with a laugh, breaking the silence.

"Okita!"

"What could you have possibly done to make him so upset, Shinpachi-san?"

Sano shoved a tray into Souji's hands and told him to go. His sarcasm and teasing remarks weren't needed and he didn't want him to be around any longer. As much as Souji wanted to stay he actually took the hint and left, chuckling as he did so. Shinpachi seemed to not

even notice that he left. He had let go of Chizuru and back away from her, staring at her as if she had told him Heisuke had just died.

"I'm so sorry, Shinpachi-san! He didn't tell me why he said that. He just said that he was going to hide in his room for the day and to do whatever I could to stop you if I saw you were going to check on him."

"Why...would he say that?"

Chizuru just shook her head, looking as if she was going to break out in tears. "I honestly don't know."

Sano handed Chizuru a tray, just as he did for Souji. Neither said a word as Shinpachi backed against the wall and slid to the ground, holding his face in his hands. Chizuru took charge of bringing the other men their food, including Heisuke, while Sano and Shinpachi talked.

"Do you want to go outside?" Sano asked him gently.

Shinpachi just shook his head, though didn't put up a fight as Sano forced him to stand and walked him outside. It was just beginning to get dark. The few pinks and reds of the evening sky were disappearing to be replaced with shining stars and an even shinier moon. The wind was gently blowing and Sano thought it would have been the perfect night for a couple to share. The irony was not lost on him.

"I think Chizuru misunderstood what Heisuke said."

"Stupid Heisuke!" Shinpachi said, his mood changing from sadness to anger. "I should have known. I should have known all along when he never told me he loved me. Our relationship was a mistake, Sano, and now he hates me!"

"He doesn't hate you."

"He doesn't feel the same way about me that he did before. I'm talking about before we were together, when things were simple and we were just friends. This was a mistake! It was a horrible mistake!"

"It wasn't a mistake!" Sano argued, standing in front of Shinpachi and putting his hands on his shoulders. "You two love each other whether you think so or not! I've seen the way Heisuke looks at you and he has nothing but love for you!"

"Then why did he say he doesn't want to see me?"

"I don't know. You can find out. Ask him. You need to talk to him."

A bitter laugh was the response Sano received. "How can I talk to him when he doesn't want to be around me?"

"Force him!"

Shinpachi shook his head and turned around to leave, but Sano wasn't letting him get off that easily. He grabbed his arm and began to pull

him in the direction of Heisuke's room. He ignored the protests coming from Shinpachi and they quickly found themselves in front of Heisuke's room door. Sano didn't bother to knock as he opened it, yelling the young man's name, however it seemed the only two people to hear it were standing in the entryway.

"He's not here," Sano said, confused. "Where did he go?"

Shinpachi scoffed as he turned away and headed for his own room. "He must have figured I was coming and ran off to hide somewhere," he said with disgust.

Sano stared into the empty room and shook his head. What had happened to his two best friends? Where had their peace and harmony left to? He was at a complete loss and he felt horrible. He knew at this point there would be little he could do to reconcile anything between Shinpachi and Heisuke. If and when Shinpachi found Heisuke it would be solely up to them to work things out.

* * *

><p>So many things were running through Shinpachi's mind. He hardly cared at all where Heisuke was. He was too busy thinking about what Heisuke told Chizuru. He couldn't understand why Heisuke decided to be with him if he didn't love him. There was no point. Shinpachi ignored the feeling of his heart breaking into little pieces as he finally made it to his room and opened the door. He quickly slammed it shut and was about to jump into his bed when he noticed something. He thought for a moment that the moonlight shining in from the paper doors was playing tricks on him with the shadows.<p>

"Heisuke?"

He blinked a few times and sure enough there was Heisuke sitting on the futon, in his sleeping clothes with his hair loose. The young man smiled and waved.

"You're earlier than I thought you would be. Did you have dinner with everyone?"

Shinpachi slowly shook his head, still in shock from actually seeing Heisuke in front of him. It shocked him more to see that Heisuke was being so casual, as if he really hadn't said that thing to Chizuru.

"You should have eaten. Oh well, since you're already here come get comfortable with me." Heisuke invited Shinpachi into bed with him, his arms wide open with a smile that could melt any heart.

Shinpachi almost didn't want to believe it.

However, he cleared his throat as he slowly made his way to Heisuke and crawled under the covers with him. The instant he got comfortable Heisuke hid his face in his neck and planted light kisses there. This confused Shinpachi to no end. If Heisuke said he didn't want to see him why did he come to his room and why was he being so affectionate? Shinpachi was torn out of those thoughts by a body climbing on top of him and a pair of lips kissing his own.

"Heisuke..." Shinpachi said, trying to pull away, but Heisuke was

putting up a fight. He continued to kiss him until Shinpachi finally grabbed his shoulders and forced his lips off of his.

"Heisuke!" he yelled, startling the other man.

The two stared at each other, both looking confused and a bit upset.

"What's wrong?" Heisuke asked.

Shinpachi wanted to tell him that everything was wrong, but he took a deep breath and counted to ten before daring to open his mouth and speak.

"Why are you here?"

The question took Heisuke completely off guard. Shinpachi only briefly saw the hurt in his eyes before the younger man rolled off of him and sat next to him, avoiding his gaze.

"Do you...not want me here?"

Shinpachi almost wanted to laugh at how depressed Heisuke sounded. How did the tables get turned for Heisuke to be the victim and Shinpachi to be the bad guy?

"It's not that," Shinpachi said. "It's just...I talked to Chizuru. She told me you stayed in your room all day because you didn't want to see me. So...since you said that I'm just wondering why you're here."

The air was heavy as Shinpachi spoke. He didn't want to just call Heisuke out, but he needed to know how he truly felt about him. There was no denying that Shinpachi only loved Heisuke and cared for him and he couldn't stand being so unsure about whether or not Heisuke felt the same way.

"I never meant to hurt you."

Shinpachi looked over at Heisuke, not bothering to hide his shocked expression. He was even more shocked when Heisuke climbed back on top of him and straddled his waist. The younger man gently stroked the side of Shinpachi's face with the back of his hand.

"I was hiding from you because I needed to think. I wasn't completely asleep last night and I heard you and Sano talking. I never meant to make you feel unloved, Shinsat-san. I didn't even realize I wasn't telling you how much I care about you. I'm so sorry."

At least part of the situation made sense now. Shinpachi was still unsure whether Heisuke actually loved him or not, but at least they were heading in the right direction. Shinpachi put his hands on Heisuke's waist and gently rubbed his sides. A smile formed on Heisuke's face as he took his lover's hands and carefully moved them to his thighs. He watched Shinpachi's face as he moved his hands upwards from his thighs to place them on his buttocks and forced the other man to give it a light squeeze.

"Heisuke?"

A giggle came from Heisuke as he heard Shinpachi's worried voice. Heisuke let go of Shinpachi's hands and bent over to give him a kiss. He was happy Shinpachi kept his hands on him even though he wasn't guiding him anymore.

"I can prove how special you are to me." Heisuke licked Shinpachi's ear causing a loud gasp to come from him. He moved down to kiss his neck again and removed his own robe while doing so. He sat up so Shinpachi could see all of him, though he hid most of his face with his hair.

"I want you to." He said in a low voice.

Shinpachi never moved his hands from where they were as he stared from Heisuke's hidden face, to his chest, to his skinny waist, and finally to his strong arousal. He had made it a point since the two of them became a couple to take his time with Heisuke and not force him into anything too quickly. Seeing everything before him confused him and shocked him, though he couldn't deny a part of him was extremely happy.

"Are you sure, Heisuke? This...it's your first time, isn't it?"

Heisuke turned his face away entirely which answered Shinpachi's question more than any words could. However, he quickly turned back around and grabbed Shinpachi's hands, forcing him to squeeze him again.

"I trust you with my heart and my body. I owe you an apology and I want to show you that you're the only person I want to be with. I'm ready for this."

It was decided. There was nothing else to be done if Heisuke felt that strongly about this. Shinpachi sat up a bit and kissed Heisuke firmly on his lips. To Shinpachi, whatever Heisuke wanted, Heisuke got and he wanted his man in more ways than one. Shinpachi was happy to oblige him.

He finally moved his hands and wrapped his arms around Heisuke's waist. He still kissed him as he turned him around so he was underneath him. Heisuke spread his legs wide, ready for Shinpachi to take him at any time. The older man absorbed the sight in front of him before returning to kiss Heisuke's lips. He ran his fingers down the smaller man's waist, feeling each tremble and shiver, before gently stroking his arousal. He felt Heisuke's hands grab his arm, but he didn't break the kiss. After touching him a bit more Shinpachi slowly slid one finger inside of him, this time getting more of a reaction.

Heisuke gasped loudly and faced away from Shinpachi, though Shinpachi just took the opportunity to kiss the side of his lover's face. After a few moments Heisuke's panting had calmed down and Shinpachi then inserted another finger. The same reaction occurred though this time Heisuke turned in his face in the other direction, earning a small laugh from Shinpachi.

Shinpachi's own arousal was trapped in his pants, making him rather uncomfortable. He removed his pants, but didn't expect Heisuke to be so quick about touching his erection. He let him play around with him

a bit before the teasing became too much for him. He lifted Heisuke's hips and slowly inserted himself inside of him. Heisuke's small pants turned to yells and Shinpachi quickly covered his mouth with his hand and bent over to kiss his cheek, his neck, anywhere there was skin in hopes of getting him to calm down.

"It's okay. It's in, Heisuke. Hush, hush," Shinpachi said gently.

Heisuke crossed his arms over his eyes and did his best to not scream. He took several breaths and when he finally felt a little calm he removed his arms and looked at Shinpachi.

"I don't have to keep going."

"Don't stop," Heisuke said in a panting whisper. "Keep going." He wrapped his arms around Shinpachi's neck as he begged him not to stop. Shinpachi trusted that Heisuke would let him know if he was in too much pain as he gently thrust into him. He listened to the sounds coming from Heisuke. At first he could tell it hurt him and he felt terribly guilty, but it didn't take too long for those sounds to change to ones of pleasure. The desperate way Heisuke clung to him ended as he felt around Shinpachi's waist and chest, getting more aroused by the minute.

"More..." Heisuke said in between gasps.

"More?"

Heisuke nodded. "Faster..."

Shinpachi smiled at Heisuke's words. He would be more than happy to give his partner exactly what he asked for. His gentle movements sped up and became more aggressive. He pressed harder and harder into the small body beneath him and listened to the sounds of pleasure coming from him.

"Shi...Shinpat..." Heisuke whispered. He moved one arm so it covered his eyes again and used his other arm to hug his body tightly. "I...love you. I love you so much..."

Shinpachi pressed hard into Heisuke again and held it there; the young boy nearly screamed again and Shinpachi stared as Heisuke's large eyes grew even wider. He held the boy close to him as he whispered in his ear, still not moving his body but pressing hard into him.

"That's the first time you've said that to me. It means so much, Heisuke."

"I do. I really do!" Heisuke let out a loud yell and kicked his legs and squirmed around in Shinpachi's arms in hopes of making him move again.

"I love you too." Shinpachi said, before once again thrusting himself into Heisuke over and over again. It didn't take much longer for Heisuke to hit his climax, followed shortly by Shinpachi who pressed into him only a few more times. He leaned down and stared at his lover before planting several small kisses on his lips. He was still inside Heisuke when the younger man wrapped his legs around his waist

and deepened their kiss.

"I want more."

Heisuke broke their kiss to say that and Shinpachi blinked at him a few times before giving a confused laugh. "Excuse me?"

"Again. Please...I want to go again."

"Are you serious?" Shinpachi asked, though Heisuke was already aroused again. Shinpachi could feel his lover's body tighten around him and simply from the look in his eyes he could tell he was dead serious. It then dawned on Shinpachi exactly what type of person Heisuke was in bed...

"You really want to go again..." Shinpachi was surprised, but he now couldn't hide that just the feel of Heisuke's tightened body had gotten him aroused again. He would play Heisuke's game though he would be the one to make up the rules. He slowly thrust in and out of Heisuke, just as he did when they first made love, though he didn't dare speed up. He lay his body over the other's and rested his head on his shoulder. Heisuke wrapped his arm around him and with each gently thrust into him he gave a small and soft sigh.

Shinpachi watched as Heisuke indulged in the feelings of pleasure again. His eyes were closed and a small smile was printed on his face. Shinpachi knew Heisuke enjoyed the harder and more aggressive sex they had just had, but this change of pace was nice and Heisuke seemed to be loving it just as much.

He continued his slow pace as he left gentle kisses on Heisuke's cheek. The younger one never opened his eyes as he kissed Shinpachi on his lips.

"I love you."

Shinpachi entwined his fingers with Heisuke's and lifted his hand to plant a kiss on it before affectionately rubbing it against his cheek. "I love that you love me."

Heisuke giggled and grinned widely. "I love that you love that I love you."

Shinpachi laughed before he completely embraced Heisuke into a hug, though he continued to hold one hand in his own. A few more kisses and a few more sweet nothings whispered in each other's ear and they both hit their climax again.

Shinpachi was almost sure Heisuke was going to ask to go a third time even though it appeared that he was completely exhausted. He couldn't keep his arm around Shinpachi so he let it fall to his side.

"Can we go-"

Heisuke was cut off by Shinpachi putting his fingers over his lips. "We're not going again, you sex fiend. You're tired. It's time for you to go sleep."

Shinpachi ran his hands through Heisuke's long hair and gently kissed his neck and before the young man could even argue back he was fast

asleep.

It didn't take much time for Shinpachi to join him in dreamland. Even while being so tired his heart soared knowing how Heisuke felt about him. There was no feeling in the world like loving someone and being loved back.

* * *

><p>And that's the end! Thanks for reading and I hope you all liked it ^_^
**

Shinpachi and Saito are standing around talking when Heisuke runs up behind Shinpachi and hugs him around his waist.

Heisuke: Shinpat-san! Let's have sex four times tonight! I'm gonna wreck you!

Awkward silence. Heisuke peaks around Shinpachi only just noticing Saito standing there

Heisuke: Oh...Saito-san. I didn't see you there.

**Saito: *is as red as a fire truck*
â€|Hello...Todo-san.**

Heisuke: *nods and walks away*

Shinpachi: *clears throat* So about that sword you saw...

End
file.